



State Emergency Coordination Center

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Situation Report for July 28, 2007 (issued @ 1500 hrs.)

07 FIRES

I. Background Information

Since June, hot and dry weather has dominated the region creating very high to extreme fire conditions. Fire Indices are at an all time high while fuel moistures are low. Accompanying the high indices are weather patterns that have set the conditions for lightning and lightning caused starts. High pressure weather patterns over the region are responsible for the high temperatures and little to no moisture. Occasional cold fronts push through the region causing severe lightning storms that ignite wildfires. Rain has accompanied some of these fronts but a return to a high pressure system mitigates any moisture that fell. The weather forecast project a continuing of the high pressure systems through August and possible into September.

Fire Restrictions and Closures Many portions of the state are currently under Stage I or Stage II Fire Restrictions. For definitions of these restrictions, see:

<http://www.mt.blm.gov/fire/restrictions/stagel.pdf>

<http://www.mt.blm.gov/fire/restrictions/stagell.pdf>

For current information about Fire Restrictions in effect for specific areas, see:

<http://www.mt.blm.gov/fire/restrictions/index.html>

II. Current Incident Situation (*Fires will be dropped from this report once they reach 100% containment*)

Little Wolf, Ahorn, Novak and Meriwether fires are being managed by Bennett's Type I team. As of 7/27, both the Little Wolf (547 acres) and Novak (1,859 acres) fire were reported 100% contained.

- **Ahorn Fire** on the Lewis and Clark National Forest in Lewis and Clark County is at 15,200 acres. 15% Containment. Personnel Assigned: 336. Structures threatened and evacuations in place. Cause: Lightning. Crews are constructing contingency lines.
- **Meriwether** located in the Gates of the Mountains Wilderness is 6,117 acres with 15% containment. Evacuations in place, some are to be lifted this evening. Structures Threatened. Personnel Assigned: 78. Cause: Lightning. Established a Meriwether Base Camp.

Fool Creek WFU on the Lewis and Clark and Flathead National Forests in Lewis and Clark County is at 6,264 acres. Reinarz's Fire Use Management Team. Observed smoldering and creeping fire. Personnel assigned: 76. Cause: Lightning

Owl on Yellowstone NP and Gallatin NF. Wilder's IMT2. The Owl Fire is 2,800 acres. 10% contained. Wilder's Type 2 IMT is in command. The fire is threatening 50 structures. Recent changes in weather patterns have begun 2 days of drying. No significant spread is expected prior to 7/29/07 Personnel assigned: 227. Cause: Lightning.

Pattengail Creek on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF. 10 miles NE of Wisdom. 4,256 acres and 25% contained. Type 3 Incident Organization. Personnel assigned: 40. Cause: Lightning. No structures currently threatened. Developing structure protection plan to help define resource and equipment needs. **Public Meeting:** Saturday at 7:30 p.m. in the Wise River Community Hall.

Garceau on the Flathead Indian Reservation. Kechter's Type 2 IMT. 2,800 acres and 40% contained. Personnel assigned: 258. Cause: Lightning. Timber and grass. The fire remains active on the northern flank. Structures threatened. Evacuations in progress

Skyland on the Flathead NF near Summit. LaFave's Type 2 IMT. Skyland is 420 acres with 25% containment. Personnel assigned: 169. Cause: Lightning. Periodic single tree and clumped torching in the advanced regeneration and in some areas of the larger timber as the temperatures increased. Spot fires east of the Skyland road continue to threaten containment and remain a priority for resources.

Conger Creek on the Lolo National Forest, 20 miles north of Ovando. The fire is 375 acres with 0% containment. Structures are threatened. Fire was active again yesterday. Short crown runs to the ridge occurred when fuel and winds aligned. Periodic torching as the fire moved upslope towards the ridge. Personnel Assigned: 12. Cause: Lightning

Sawmill Creek on the Lolo NF. The Sawmill Creek Fire is 150 acres with 0% containment. Personnel assigned: 11. Cause: Lightning. Twenty-two miles southeast of Missoula, MT. Burning in timber with individual tree torching and backing fire. Structures threatened.

NEW LARGE FIRES (Large fires are fires over 100 acres in size) – None reported within Montana 7/28.

III. Weather

Red Flag Warnings or Fire Weather Watches:

The Great Falls office of the National Weather Service has issued a Red Flag Warning for Fire Weather Zone 112. The Red Flag Warning is effective from noon today until 9:00 PM (MDT) for low afternoon humidities and gusty winds along the Rocky Mountain Front and the adjacent plains.

Definitions of a Fire Weather Watch and a Red Flag Warning:

A fire weather watch or red flag warning is issued when the combination of dry fuels and weather conditions support extreme fire danger. These products are written for land and fire managers to highlight the increased fire danger.

A fire weather watch is issued up to 72 hours before the above conditions are expected to occur.

A red flag warning is issued when the conditions above are occurring or expected to occur within the next 24 hours.

Weather Forecast For current Fire Weather Predictions, see the Daily Outlook at:
http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/predictive/outlooks/daily_outlook.pdf.

Fire Behavior Forecast For current Fire Behavior Predictions, see:
http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/predictive/outlooks/fire_behavior/fire_behavior.pdf

IV. State Declarations

- Statewide Declaration of a Wildland Fire Emergency

V. Local and Tribal Declarations

- **State of Emergency.** The following counties have declared a state of emergency:

Lewis and Clark	Ravalli
Lake	Granite
Cascade	Missoula
Beaverhead	Sanders

- **Disaster Declaration.** The following counties have declared a wildfire disaster:

Teton	Gallatin
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VI. Local Government Emergency Operations

- The Lewis and Clark County Emergency Operation Center was activated on July 19, 2007.

VII. Requests for State Financial Assistance

- N/A

VIII. Summary of State Resources Committed (through the SECC)

- MT-DES currently has two employees deployed with Incident Management Teams (through the Northern Rockies Coordination Center).
- One Montana Army National Guard UH-60 Blackhawk module is deployed for initial attack. The Blackhawk and its module are staged in Helena.
- One Montana Army National Guard UH-60 Blackhawk and module is deployed for initial attack. The Blackhawk and its module are stationed in Missoula.
- One Montana Army National Guard CH-47 Chinook and module has been ordered for fire support to be available on Monday morning 8/30/07 and will be assigned to Bennett's Type 1 Team.
- July 20, 2007 at 0700 the SECC was activated and staffed to a Level III status with extended hours (0700-1900) The MT DES staff Duty Officer is available 24 hrs and may be reached at (406) 841-3911.